What is claimed is:

1. A method for inhibiting macrophage death in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease which comprises administering to the subject an effective amount of an amphiphilic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof which inhibits the intracellular transport of cholesterol within cells, wherein the transport is from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum, so as to thereby inhibit macrophage death in the subject.

2. A method for inhibiting atherosclerotic lesional complications in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease which comprises administering to the subject an effective amount of an amphiphilic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof which inhibits the intracellular transport of cholesterol within cells, wherein the transport is from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum, so as to thereby inhibit atherosclerotic lesional complications in the subject.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the compound is 2β-(2-diethylaminoethoxy)-androstenone (U18666A).

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of from about 30 nM to about 120 nM.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the compound, when

administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of about 70 nM.

6. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the compound is imipramine.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of from about 2 μM to about 20 μM.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a concentration of about 8 μM.

9. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the intracellular cholesterol storage site is a lysosome, a recycling endosome, a sorting endosome, or a late endosome.

10. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the cells are macrophage cells, endothelial cells, smooth muscle cells, T cells, or dendritic cells.

11. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the subject is a mammal.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the mammal is a human.

13. A method for inhibiting macrophage death in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease which comprises administering to the subject an effective amount of an amphiphilic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof which inhibits free cholesterol-induced death of cells

in the subject by inhibiting intracellular transport of cholesterol within the cells, wherein the transport is from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum, so as to thereby inhibit macrophage death in the subject.

14. A method for inhibiting atherosclerotic lesional complications in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease which comprises administering to the subject an effective amount of an amphiphilic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof which inhibits free cholesterol-induced death of cells in the subject by inhibiting intracellular transport of cholesterol within the cells, wherein the transport is from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum, so as to thereby inhibit atherosclerotic lesional complications in the subject.

15. The method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the compound is 2β-(2-diethylaminoethoxy)-androstenone (U18666A).

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of from about 30 nM to about 120 nM.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of about 70 nM.

18. The method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the compound is imipramine.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of from about 2 μM to about 20 μM.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of about 8 μM.

21. The method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the intracellular cholesterol storage site is a lysosome, a recycling endosome, a sorting endosome, or a late endosome.

22. The method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the cells are macrophage cells, endothelial cells, smooth muscle cells, T cells, or dendritic cells.

23. The method of claim 13 or 14, wherein the subject is a mammal.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the mammal is a human.

25. The method as in any one of claims 1, 2, 13 and 14, wherein the compound inhibits the function of Neiman Pick C1 (NPC1) protein within the cells.

26. The method as in any one of claims 1, 2, 13 and 14, wherein the compound inhibits expression of Neiman Pick C1 (NPC1) protein within the cells.

27. A method for inhibiting necrosis, plaque rupture and/or superficial erosion in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease

which comprises administering to the subject an effective amount of an amphiphilic compound or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof which inhibits intracellular transport of cholesterol within cells, wherein the transport is from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum, so as to thereby inhibit necrosis, plaque rupture and/or superficial erosion in the subject.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the plaque rupture or superficial erosion leads to acute thrombosis, vascular occlusion, stroke, tissue infarction, or other acute vascular disease or condition.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein the compound is 2β-(2-diethylaminoethoxy)-androstenone (U18666A).

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of from about 30 nM to about 120 nM.

31. The method of claim 29, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of about 70 nM.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the compound is imipramine.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the compound, when administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of from about 2 μM to about 20 μM.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein the compound, when

administered to the subject, is at a blood concentration of about 8 μM.

35. The method of claim 27, wherein the intracellular cholesterol storage site is a lysosome, a recycling endosome, a sorting endosome, or a late endosome.

36. The method of claim 27, wherein the cells are macrophage cells, endothelial cells, smooth muscle cells, T cells, or dendritic cells.

37. The method of claim 27, wherein the subject is a mammal.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the mammal is a human.

39. An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and an amphiphilic compound, wherein the compound inhibits the intracellular transport of cholesterol from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum in cells, and the packaging material comprises a label indicating that the compound is intended for use in inhibiting macrophage death in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease.

40. An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and an amphiphilic compound, wherein the compound inhibits the intracellular transport of cholesterol from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum in cells, and the packaging material comprises a label indicating that the compound is intended for use in inhibiting

atherosclerotic lesional complications in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing, cardiovascular disease.

41. The article of claim 39 or 40, wherein the cells are macrophage cells, endothelial cells, smooth muscle cells, T cells, or dendritic cells.

42. The article of claim 39 or 40, wherein the compound is U18666A or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

43. The article of claim 39 or 40, wherein the compound is imipramine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

44. The article of claim 39 or 40, wherein the subject is a human.

45. An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and an amphiphilic compound, wherein the compound inhibits the intracellular transport of cholesterol within cells, wherein the transport is from an intracellular cholesterol storage site to the endoplasmic reticulum, wherein the packaging material comprises a label indicating that the compound is intended for use in inhibiting necrosis, plaque rupture and/or superficial erosion in a subject having, or at increased risk for developing cardiovascular disease.

46. The article of claim 45, wherein the cells are macrophage cells, endothelial cells, smooth muscle cells, T cells, or dendritic cells.

47. The article of claim 45, wherein the compound is U18666A or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

48. The article of claim 45, wherein the compound is imipramine or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

49. The article of claim 45, wherein the subject is a human.